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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

SPD-IM-02-029

Date: May 3, 2002

TO: SPD District and Unit Managers
Area Agency on Aging Directors
Governor's Commission on Senior Services

**SUBJECT: Comment Period for 2002 Update to the Oregon Senior
Employment Services Coordination Plan**

INFORMATION:

Attached is a draft of the 2002 update of the Oregon Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan. This plan is a requirement of the Older Americans Act for the Title V Senior Community Services Employment Program. The Plan is intended to improve coordination among organizations engaged in older worker activities, and to enhance employment services for older workers.

Please review the attached draft plan within your organization, with advisory councils and with community partners. Written comments should be submitted by **June 10, 2002** to Lee Girard. Comments can be submitted by e-mail, fax or mail.

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Oregon Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan

2002 Update

Section 1. Plan Participation.

The State Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) grantee has taken lead responsibility for updating the Coordination Plan. The National SCSEP grantees and State sub-grantees also participated in the development of the plan. This participation included: review of the 2001 Coordination Plan and suggestions for improving the plan; review and update of the Equitable Distribution Plan for Oregon; review and comment on the draft updates to the Plan; and distribution of the Plan to community partners for input.

Section 2. Organizational Involvement.

- a. The State Office on Aging coordinated development of the Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan. The draft Coordination Plan was distributed to the Area Agencies on Aging and the Governor's Commission on Senior Services for review and comment. See Attachment I for any comments.
- b. SCSEP grantees operating in the State reviewed the contents of the 2001 Coordination Plan, making recommendations for improvements and additions. The draft update to the Plan was presented to the grantees at a meeting and written comments were solicited. See Attachment I.
- c. A written copy of the draft update to the Plan was distributed to all of the One-Stop work force providers in Oregon for review and comment. See Attachment I.
- d. The Oregon Workforce Investment Board was provided an opportunity to provide written comment on the plan. The Governor's Workforce Policy Cabinet and the Statewide Workforce Action Team also reviewed the plan.
- e. Oregon SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees distributed the draft plan to

business and labor organizations in their communities for review and comment.

Section 3. Comments

Comments received regarding this plan are attached as Attachment I.

Section 4. Plan Provisions

a. Basic Distribution of SCSEP Positions.

Attachment II is a copy of the Equitable Distribution Report for Oregon as submitted in response to Older Worker Bulletin OW-02-1. Oregon's SCSEP resources are close to equity in every county, with all counties being within 1 to 3 positions of their equitable share of positions. There are no plans to make substantial shifts in locations of positions. Minor changes in position locations will be made with consideration to the Equitable Distribution Report submitted to Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Older Worker Programs. In 2002/2003 the SCSEP grantees of Oregon plan to reevaluate the equitable distribution plan using the updated demographic information from the 2000 U.S. Census.

b. Special Populations.

Greatest economic need:

Based on the 2000 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics (U.S. Census Bureau), the number of persons in Oregon with incomes at or below poverty is estimated to be 430,760 or 13% of the total population in Oregon. For people 65 years and over 37,281 or 8.9% are estimated to be at or below poverty level.

For the program year ending 6/30/01, 71% of all enrollees in Oregon had incomes below poverty level. Three of the five grantees had percentages exceeding 88% of enrollees below poverty level.

Minority groups:

Oregon is one of the least racially/ethnically diverse states in the nation (Population Research Center, Portland State University). Oregon's minority population age 55 and older is 5.6% of the total age 55 and older population based on the 1999 population estimates.

As of June 30, 2001, 13% of all SCSEP enrollees in Oregon belonged to one of the five minority populations tracked by the SCSEP reporting system. Two of the SCSEP grantees in Oregon whose service areas are concentrated in urban communities had percentages of minority enrollees of 22% and 50%.

Greatest social need:

Oregon is beginning to identify and track non-economic factors that impact individuals potentially eligible for SCSEP services. The first of these factors are grandparents with grandchildren under 18 years of age in their households. In Oregon there are currently an estimated 46,077 grandparents with grandchildren in their households (U.S. Census Bureau). Of these, approximately 33% have primary responsibility for their grandchildren. Of grandparents with primary responsibility for their grandchildren 66% are in the labor force and almost 11% are in poverty.

The 2000 U.S. Census also estimates that there are 180,241 Oregonians 65 years and over with a disability. This is 43% of the population 65 years and older. Currently, approximately 26% of the SCSEP enrollees report having some type of disability. Grantees have found that there is a significant incidence of under-reporting of disabilities by enrollees. They speculate this may be due to a perception of bias against older workers with disabilities by employers.

Migration patterns significantly impact the populations of elderly Oregonians in several counties (Population Research Center, Portland State University). More than 20% of the 65+ populations in Deschutes, Curry and Josephine Counties result from in-migration. Due to out-migration of younger persons the population of Wheeler, Gilliam,

Baker and Wallowa Counties have an increasing elderly proportion. These areas are likely to have increased demand for senior employment services.

The current SCSEP reporting system does not track these types of data, so there would be no comparable data available with which to assure adequate service to those who fall within this category. However, identification of these needs within the potentially eligible population will help SCSEP grantees target outreach, enrollment and support efforts.

c. Employment Situations and Types of Skills.

Oregon's unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) recently peaked at 8.1%, one of the highest in the nation. There are a number of rural counties in Oregon with unemployment rates exceeding 10%. The Oregon Office of Economic Analysis is forecasting that employment will continue to fall 0.7% in 2002 and grow 2.2% in 2003. With the recent economic down turn in Oregon there are a number of individuals aged 55 to 64 that have been terminated from long-term employment due to lay offs. This has been especially prevalent in manufacturing, communications and high technology industries in Oregon. Individuals in long-term manufacturing fields are finding few opportunities in their areas and often require retraining to meet current employment needs.

The vast majority of SCSEP applicants under the age of 65 need paid employment to pay for basic necessities like housing, food, transportation, medication and medical care. Many of those above the age of 65, depending on the amount of social security they receive, need to work to supplement meager retirement benefits, pay for prescription medicines and medical care not covered by Medicare. There are a few applicants who come in because they want "something to do" to keep busy.

Many SCSEP applicants come in with few current workplace skills. Women might have secretarial skills but most are years outdated. They might be able to type but have no computer skills, have not worked with multi-line phone systems, or have not used fax machines. Due to declining health and stamina most enrollees want jobs that are not

physically demanding. Many people over 60 cannot stand for long periods of time and/or routinely lift heavy objects.

Men come in who have skills usable in restaurant/kitchen settings, manufacturing, warehousing, janitorial, and security. Many have left more strenuous employment due to health/disability issues. Because of these issues they are looking for employment opportunities that are part-time, less strenuous and/or have normal work hours.

The Oregon Workforce Investment Act Unified Plan has identified a lack of key skill sets in the current workforce. These are skills required in all types of jobs and include communication, interpersonal relations, basic/advanced math and computer skills. Many SCSEP applicants have not finished high school, have basic literacy problems and/or lack basic skills. This is a more prevalent issue in the rural communities with one rural provider having 44% of enrollees lacking a high school degree or GED and a number of providers having more than 20% of such enrollees. As of December 31, 2001 17% of SCSEP enrollees had not graduated from high school.

According to the Unified Plan the second and third fastest growing job areas in Oregon are services (18% projected increase) and sales (14% projected increase). They will account for about 40% of jobs and require only on the job training, although the majority of these jobs will be in the low wage range. This types of employment rely heavily on the basic skills identified above.

In 2000 the unemployment rate in Oregon for persons 55 to 64 years old was 3.8% and for persons 65 years and older it was 3.6%. This was significantly higher than the national rate of 2.7% and 3.1% (WIA Unified Plan for Oregon). While this rate is lower than for other age groups it is likely that older workers become “discouraged” and stop trying to find work; thereby not being counted in the labor force or as unemployed. With the recent increase in unemployment rates in Oregon it is likely the current rate of unemployment for older workers is much higher than it was in 2000. The Unified Plan identifies education and training related to preparing for, finding, and succeeding at employment at a primary remedy for the “discouraged” older worker.

Older workers are more likely than other age groups to be self-employed. Based on this, the Unified Plan has identified the goal of educating and training older workers to run small businesses.

d. Needs of Specific Populations and Local Community Service Needs.

Non-English speaking applicants need to have ESL classes before moving to more specific skills training. Many applicants, not just minority populations, need basic skills classes before beginning specific skill training. The most needed training for all eligible populations is computer skills training in word processing, database and spreadsheet programs. Another need for many SCSEP applicants is to have current work experience.

Rural communities have been most severely impacted by the recent economic down turn in Oregon with unemployment rates reach as high as 11% and poverty rates over 20%. These are some of the same communities with high percentages of senior populations.

The types of community services most often requested include clerical, (particularly with computer skills) receptionist and janitorial assistance for community service non-profits; city, county and state governments; libraries; non-profit or public hospitals; smaller museums in rural areas, nutrition assistance at senior centers; and schools in rural areas. Areas of the state which have relatively high rates of unemployment also seem to have more needs for community service assistance.

The current economic situation has resulted in significant local and state budget shortages. With these shortages local community services are having to reduce programs and work force. They are relying more heavily on volunteers and programs such as SCSEP as resources. These community programs are also more limited in their ability to provide unsubsidized employment for SCSEP enrollees.

The majority of SCSEP subsidized community placements are currently in education, employment assistance, social services and recreation/senior centers.

e. Coordination with the Workforce Investment Act.

All SCSEP grantees have made significant efforts to become involved with local Workforce Investment Boards and with the local One Stop system. Most grantees have enrollees assigned to One-Stop Centers. One grantee, NCOA, has a project located in the Northeast One-Stop in Northeast Portland and in the Lane Workforce Partnership One-Stop in Eugene, Oregon. All the state subgrantees, with one exception, are also Workforce Investment Act recipients. The one exception, in Portland, is a member of the one-stop planning committees, actively participates as a one-stop partner and has SCSEP participants located in three of the five Multnomah/Washington County One-Stop centers.

Green Thumb has enrollees located at the following One-Stop locations: North Bend, Roseburg, Grants Pass, Medford, Woodburn, Lebanon, Albany, Salem, Sublimity, St. Helens, Newport, Tillamook, Beaverton, Hillsboro and Astoria. At each of these locations, the Green Thumb enrollees offer a full range of SCSEP services to older adults.

Section 5. Plan Recommendations

Following are recommendations for improving the SCSEP program in Oregon. The SCSEP grantees will coordinate in accomplishing these goals over the next year.

1. Goal: Increase the awareness of the public, WIA partners, government officials, employers, host agencies and others about the SCSEP program and older worker issues.
Strategies:
 - SCSEP grantees will develop a coordinated presentation about the SCSEP program and older worker issues.
 - Each SCSEP grantee and sub-grantee will make one presentation in the upcoming year using the coordinated presentation developed by the older worker partners.
2. Goal: Improve coordination among SCSEP grantees, promote older worker issues and improve coordination with local One-stop systems.

Strategies:

- SCSEP grantees have developed one regional coalition in the metropolitan area that coordinates older worker issues. Grantees will expand this effort by establishing an older worker coalition in Eastern Oregon.
- Update the Equitable Distribution Plan for Oregon using 2000 census data information.

3. Goal: Continue to improve coordination between the SCSEP program and WIA programs.

Strategies:

- Grantees will work to establish a coordinated memorandum of understanding with the State WIB. Most of the Oregon SCSEP grantees have memorandums of understanding with local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) and One-stop partners. However, there is no similar agreement with the State WIB.
- Increase participation with the State WIB through their quarterly meetings and sub-committees.

4. Goal: Increase awareness of the disparity between funding of SCSEP enrollee slots, which are based on federal minimum wage, and the requirement to reimburse enrollee wages using the higher Oregon minimum wage.

Strategies:

- Educate the Governor's office and WIB partners regarding the disparity in funding.
- Grantees will provide comment during the public comment period for the development of the federal regulations for the SCSEP program.

Attachment I

Comments on Plan

Attachment II

Oregon's Equitable Distribution Report

Distribution of SCSEP Resources in Oregon

The SCSEP resources allocated to each state are based on the amount of money it costs to support a part-time SCSEP enrollee. In Oregon, there are sufficient resources to support 884 part-time SCSEP enrollees. These 884 part-time positions are distributed as follows:

AARP (122), Experience Works (formerly Green Thumb) (301), National Council on Aging (109), US Forest Service (172), State (180): Total 884

County	Distribution Factor %	Equitable Share	Current Number of Positions	No. of positions over or under equity
Baker	1.07	9	State 6 <u>USFS 5</u> Total 11	+2
Benton	1.07	9	EW 7 <u>USFS 3</u> Total 10	+1
Clackamas	5.93	52	AARP 9 EW 16 State 15 <u>USFS 10</u> Total 50	-2
Clatsop	1.45	13	<u>EW 11</u> Total 11	-2
Columbia	1.25	11	<u>EW 11</u> Total 11	0
Coos	3.79	34	EW 28 <u>USFS 4</u> Total 32	-2
Crook	.83	7	State 1 <u>USFS 7</u> Total 8	+1
Curry	1.11	10	EW 4 <u>USFS 5</u> Total 9	-1

County	Distribution Factor %	Equitable Share	Current Number of Positions	No. of positions over or under equity
Deschutes	2.72	24	State 13 <u>USFS 12</u> Total 25	+1
Douglas	4.75	42	EW 25 <u>USFS 17</u> Total 42	0
Gilliam	.07	1	State 1	0
Grant	.37	3	State 1 <u>USFS 3</u> Total 4	+1
Harney	.38	3	State 3 <u>USFS 1</u> Total 4	1
Hood River	.68	6	EW 2 State 2 <u>USFS 4</u> Total 8	2
Jackson	6.28	56	EW 45 <u>USFS 9</u> Total 54	-2
Jefferson	.65	6	State 5 <u>USFS 1</u> Total 6	0
Josephine	4.33	38	EW 20 <u>USFS 18</u> Total 38	0
Klamath	2.65	23	State 16 <u>USFS 8</u> Total 24	+1

County	Distribution Factor %	Equitable Share	Current Number of Positions	No. of positions over or under equity
Lake	.45	4	State 1 <u>USFS 4</u> Total 5	+1
Lane	8.99	79	EW 15 NCOA 51 <u>USFS 15</u> Total 81	+2
Lincoln	2.11	19	EW 12 <u>USFS 7</u> Total 19	0
Linn	3.89	34	EW 31 <u>USFS 3</u> Total 34	0
Malheur	1.52	13	State 14	1
Marion	7.54	67	AARP 51 EW 12 <u>USFS 3</u> Total 66	-1
Morrow	.36	3	State 3	0
Multnomah	20.43	181	AARP 59 NCOA 58 State 46 <u>USFS 15</u> Total 178	-3
Polk	1.48	13	AARP 3 <u>EW 10</u> State 13	0
Sherman	.11	1	State 1	0
Tillamook	1.22	11	EW 10 <u>USFS 1</u> Total 11	0

County	Distribution Factor %	Equitable Share	Current Number of Positions	No. of positions over or under equity
Umatilla	2.60	23	State 17 <u>USFS 6</u> Total 23	0
Union	1.04	9	State 6 <u>USFS 4</u> Total 10	+1
Wallowa	.41	4	State 2 <u>USFS 3</u> Total 5	+1
Wasco	.85	8	State 5 <u>USFS 1</u> Total 6	-2
Washington	5.47	48	EW 24 State 21 <u>USFS 3</u> Total 48	0
Wheeler	.16	2	State 1	-1
Yamhill	1.99	18	EW 18	0
Grand Totals	100.0	884	884	0